

REPORT TO: STANDING CRIME SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE: 5th January 2017

REPORT TITLE: Begging in Enfield

REPORT AUTHOR/S:

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

Street Begging has been identified as a local and pan London issue

SUMMARY: This report outlines the reported incidents of begging in Enfield recorded by Police and Enfield's Public Safety Centre.

1. BACKGROUND

Begging

Begging is the solicitation of money or property, especially in the street. There is a close link between begging and homelessness and homeless charity Crisis estimates that over 80 per cent of beggars are homeless and that there is also a strong relationship between begging, substance misuse and poor physical and mental health.

Begging itself is an offence and a person can be arrested and prosecuted under the Vagrancy Act 1824 (section 3). This enables the arrest of anybody who is begging. Although begging is illegal it does not carry a jail sentence as it is a recordable offence.

2. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Ward	CCTV logs	CAD calls
Bowes	20	16
Bush Hill Park	11	30
Chase	0	4
Cockfosters	0	13
Edmonton	65	75
Green	4	8
Enfield Highway	1	7
Enfield Lock	6	8
Grange	0	29
Haselbury		

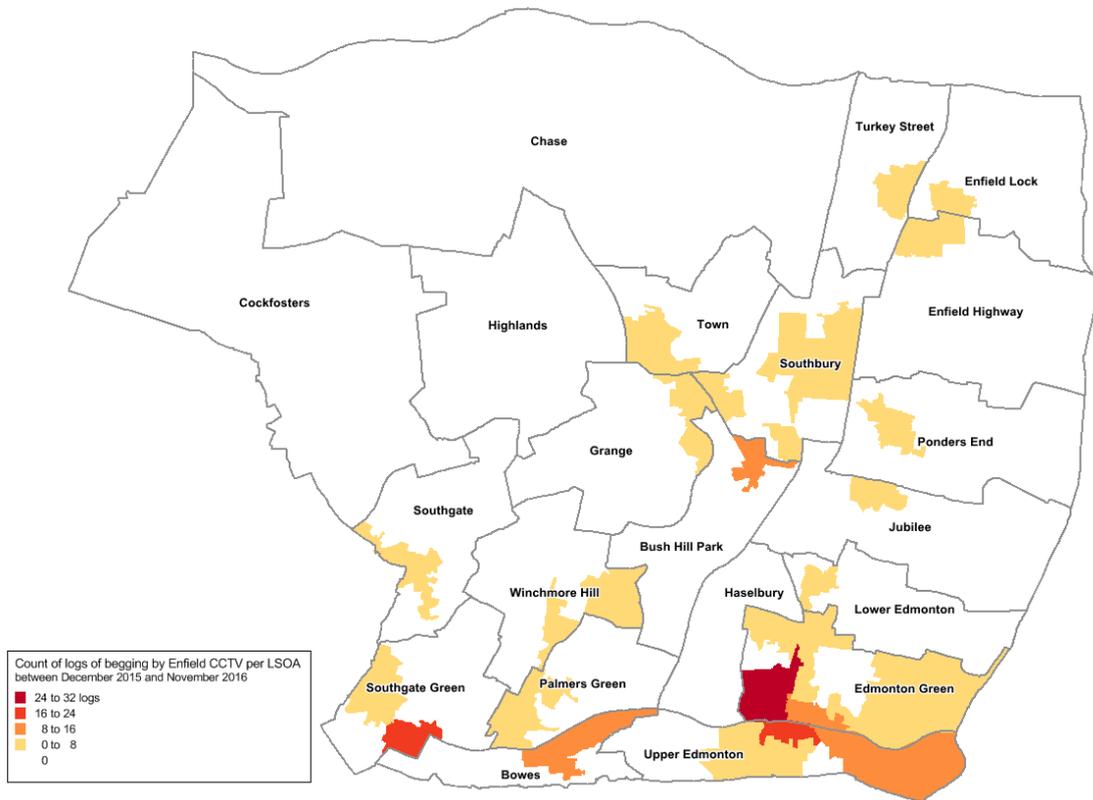
Highlands	0	2
Jubilee	1	3
Lower Edmonton	3	11
Palmers Green	8	40
Ponders End	2	14
Southbury	4	25
Southgate	2	15
Southgate Green	23	51
Town	7	17
Turkey Street	1	27
Upper Edmonton	45	46
Winchmore Hill	2	7
Total	205	448

From this data (that is mapped below) we can see that begging in Enfield is more of a Borough wide issue that also concentrates in town centres and busy high streets. Begging is one of the highest volumes of ASB type Police CAD calls in the last 3 years in Enfield. The calls are monitored at the Joint Tasking Action Group which is held monthly. If there is a case of persistent or aggressive begging which is having an impact on the local community, the Neighbourhood Police Team or Safer Estates/Problem Solving Team will be tasked to that location.

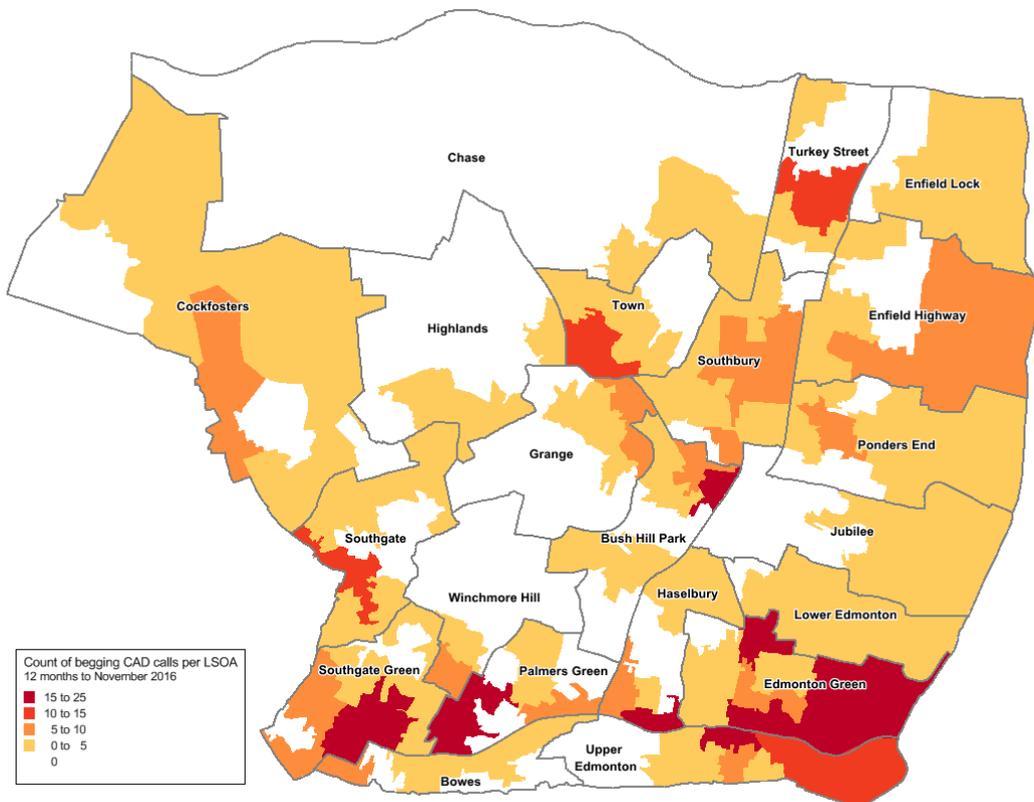
In mid-2016 residents and businesses in Palmers Green ward were reporting anti-social behaviour from a male who was being particularly verbally aggressive in his begging towards members of the public. Police ASB officers within the Community Safety Unit worked closely with NPT to obtain a Criminal Behaviour Order in September 16 which saw some particularly stringent prohibitions. These included restrictions on entering any licensed premises in Palmers Green and Southgate, not to enter any public houses in Enfield or to loiter outside, Not to enter Starbucks or Costa or loiter outside and not to beg for money or property within England and Wales.

In early 2016 the Community Safety Unit were involved in a joint operation between Police and Immigration in the Upper Edmonton Ward following a number of complaints from residents of persistent begging on Fore Street from EU nationals. Prior to this operation the CSU also engaged Thamesreach (a London-based charity helping homeless and vulnerable people to find decent homes, build supportive relationships and lead fulfilling lives). Officers were successful in engaging with individuals stopped for begging and moving them on from the location, immigration officers also served immigration notices on EU nationals that were breaching any treaty rights.

Map of CCTV logs of begging incidents



Map of Police begging CAD calls



The London Borough of Enfield have just completed a consultation on whether residents would like certain activities restricted under a Public Space Protection Order (which was a new provision created in the Anti-Social Behaviour and Policing Act 2014) The power is intended to deal with a particular nuisance in a defined area that is considered to be a problem; and that affects a community's quality of life. One of the questions asked was relating to the restriction of aggressive begging. The results of the consultation are now being analysed and we await the findings.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is being asked to note the report for information

4. Next Steps

- To consider further operations and targeted patrols with Police, CSU, immigration.
- To have further discussions with organisations ThamesReach and Streetlink about outreach work that can be carried out to wards that are experiencing high levels of street begging.
- EPSC will continue to monitor and log incidents of begging this will help to inform operations are being considered to be undertaken.